

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /013 R

DRAFTED BY EA/PHL:JCMONJO:JSARTORIUS:CSCHRISTIAN:PAW
APPROVED BY EA/PHL:JMONJO

-----125384 171400Z /50

R 162227Z MAY 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 124799

FOR EA ONLY, MANILA POUCH CEBU

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PARM, APER (MURPHY, RICHARD W.), ENRG, RP

SUBJECT: WEEKLY STATUS REPORT - PHILIPPINES

TO : EA - MR. HOLBROOKE

FROM: EA/PHL - JOHN C. MONJO

1. SSOD (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

PHILIPPINE CHARGE BELISARIO CONFIRMED TO US MAY 16 THAT
FONSEC ROMULO IS EXPECTED TO ARRIVE MAY 23 IN
NEW YORK FOR THE SSOD MEETING (NO FURTHER MENTION OF
MRS. MARCOS). WE ARE PREPARING BRIEFING MATERIALS FOR
THE SECRETARY IN PREPARATION FOR A POSSIBLE MEETING BE-
TWEEN THE TWO. (MANILA: IF YOU KNOW OF ANY SPECIFIC
TOPIC WHICH ROMULO IS LIKELY TO RAISE IN AN EVENTUAL
MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY, PLEASE ALERT US BY IMMEDIATE
TELEGRAM.)

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2. AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MURPHY'S CONFIRMATION HEARING SCHEDULED (UNCLASSIFIED)

THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE HAS SCHEDULED
AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MURPHY'S CONFIRMATION HEARING FOR
NEXT TUESDAY, MAY 23, AT 10 A.M. THE AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE
HAS BEEN CONTINUING HIS BUSY SCHEDULE OF CONSULTATIONS,

WITH APPOINTMENTS SCHEDULED TODAY WITH THE DEPUTY SECRETARY AND FRIDAY WITH THE SECRETARY. OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS HE WILL BE MAKING MORE CALLS ON THE HILL: SENATORS MCGOVERN, BIDEN, RIBICOFF, INOUE, AND JAVITS; REPRESENTATIVES ZABLOCKI AND MEYNER.

3. FOURTH WELL TO BE DRILLED IN REED BANK AREA
(CONFIDENTIAL)

AFTER A HIATUS OF MORE THAN NINE MONTHS, EXPLORATORY OIL DRILLING IS SCHEDULED TO BE RESUMED IN THE INTERNATIONALLY DISPUTED REED BANK WATERS OF THE SPRATLY ISLANDS, STARTING MAY 14 OR 15. THE AREA, IN WHICH THE PRC, VIETNAM AND THE ROC ALSO MAINTAIN CLAIMS, LIES APPROXIMATELY 150 MILES WEST OF PALAWAN ISLAND. THE FIRST WELL, DRILLED IN 1976 UNDER THE DIRECTION OF A SWEDISH GROUP, SALEN, HAD SOME -- BUT NOT COMMERCIALY SUFFICIENT -- SHOWS OF NATURAL GAS. AMOCO SUBSEQUENTLY BOUGHT INTO THE CONSORTIUM AND DRILLED TWO DRY WELLS IN 1977. FOR THE FOURTH WELL, SALEN WILL SERVE AS OPERATOR USING A U.S. FLAG DRILLSHIP, GLOMAR TASMAN, MANNED AT LEAST IN PART BY AMERICAN CITIZENS. LAST MARCH AMOCO "RESIGNED" AS OPERATOR FOR REED BANK OIL EXPLORATION, BUT WILL CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONSORTIUM WITH A 22.5 PERCENT INTEREST. AMOCO BELIEVES THAT FROM DATA COLLECTED ON THE FIRST THREE WELLS, THE REED BANK IS NOT AN ATTRACTIVE
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PROSPECT GIVEN OTHER OPTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES FOR COMPANY INVESTMENT. HOWEVER, THE TERMS OF THE CONSORTIUM'S SERVICE CONTRACT WITH THE GOP STIPULATE THAT AT LEAST ONE MORE WELL MUST BE DRILLED WITHIN 12 MONTHS FROM FEBRUARY 20, 1978, OR THE AREA RELEASED. ALL OF THE AMERICAN INTERESTS INVOLVED IN THE VENTURE ARE AWARE THAT THEY ARE OPERATING IN A CONTESTED AREA AND CANNOT COUNT ON USG ASSISTANCE IN THE EVENT OF DIFFICULTIES WITH OTHER COUNTRY CLAIMANTS.

4. PLEASE NOTE FOR EA ONLY CAPTION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 may 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE124799
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JCMONJO:JSARTORIUS:CSCHRISTIAN:PAW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780207-1074
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780552/aaaabshv.tel
Line Count: 107
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d6393e9c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2673822
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WEEKLY STATUS REPORT - PHILIPPINES TO : EA - MR. HOLBROOKE FROM: EA/PHL - JOHN C. MONJO
TAGS: PARM, APER, ENRG, RP, (MURPHY, RICHARD W)
To: EA POSTS
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d6393e9c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014